

Book Review

The Scientific Basis of Integrative Medicine

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A number of books have been published on the principles of CAM. Each book of this kind aids our understanding of the intrinsic principles of this developing branch of medicine. Among them, however, some books occupy a special place on our bookshelves. These are the special books that you need in your everyday work. *The Scientific Basis of Integrative Medicine*, written by Leonard Wisneski, MD, and Lucy Anderson, belongs to this category.

First of all, it is written by professionals. Leonard Wisneski is Clinical Professor of Medicine at George Washington University and Adjunct Clinical Professor of the National College of Naturopathic Medicine. He is also a past president of the International Society for the Study of Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine, a past member of the Board of Trustees of the American Holistic Medical Association and a founding member of the Complementary and Alternative Medicine division of the Georgetown University Medical School Curriculum Planning Committee. In addition, he has fellowship positions in the American College of Physicians, the American College of Nutrition and the American Institute of Stress. A UCLA-trained acupuncturist, he was a pioneer in exploring the clinical efficacy of integrative medicine in his own clinical practice. As a medical director for American Whole Health, he led a 24-practitioner integrative medicine center in Chevy Chase, Maryland. When he was a corporate medical director for Marriott International, the wellness program he ran for 15 years earned the C. Everett Koop Award for Excellence. As Director of Medical Education at Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, Maryland, he was honored on three separate occasions as Outstanding Faculty Member as well as Teacher of the Year. Building upon his expertise in the field of internal

medicine and endocrinology, Dr. Wisneski's 25 years of experience in the field of medicine have enabled him to develop expertise in clinical practice, medical education, corporate medicine, health care delivery and academic medicine, and have positioned him uniquely to help guide innovative initiatives in CAM.

Lucy Anderson is a medical author, editor and journalist. After many years of publishing in the leading medical journals she has the ability to make any complicated professional text readable even for non-professionals.

Together they have created a book that may be not only useful for CAM professionals but interesting for laypeople and students.

The book has eight chapters, which lead its readers step by step from classical medicine, through the new ideas in psychoneuroimmunology, and finally to energy and soul medicine. This is a real integration of somatic, psychic and spiritual approaches to understanding human nature. The integration is based on a very serious basis of modern scientific ideas. It is amazing to see how the authors deal with several thousand references both from books and from journals. To some extent this book may serve as an excellent reference guide to the vast CAM literature. I would not be surprised in the future to find on the Internet a CAM database based on this book. Let us hope no fees would be charged for using such a database.

At the same time, this is not an ordinary textbook. The authors propose several groundbreaking ideas for CAM practice and development. First of all, they call attention to the existence of the enteric nervous system (ENS), the third division of the autonomic nervous system (ANS) alongside the sympathetic and parasympathetic divisions. The ENS is a nervous system of the gut which possesses activities independent from other parts of the ANS. Acceptance of this premise has opened the way to research and discoveries in the treatment of a number of gastrointestinal diseases.

Another important topic is a relatively new definition of two independent systems of the human organism: the stress system and the relaxation system. Nowadays we have come to the

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common agreement that stress is an important factor of our life; in this book are to be found the authors' rich descriptions of stress from various medical points of view: its impact on health, illness and memory. Of course, we all know about stress and its impact on our life, but this book expands this knowledge to provide a scientific basis for the most delicate mechanisms of metabolic activities. A short chapter on therapeutic modalities related to the relaxation system of our organism serves as a brief overview and reference guide to different techniques, organized in accordance with categories of active operating modalities: mechanical, chemical, light, sound, bio-electromagnetic, thermal, nonthermal, psychological. It is a very useful review if you need to make a first choice for your own practice.

The final three chapters of the book are dedicated to establishing a scientific foundation for the emerging field of subtle energy medicine. Acupuncture, QiGong, Reiki and other types of modalities are attracting more and more attention from professionals; at the same time they suffer from the lack of a serious scientific basis. We do not really understand the principles of their operation and hence are unable to predict the outcome of healing efforts. In addition, in all these cases we have direct interaction between the active force of a doctor and the receptive energy of a patient, whereas in classical medicine a doctor just serves as a source of prescriptions based on symptoms and analysis.

One of the most impressive chapters in this book is entitled 'The Pineal Gland: Psychology Meets Energy'. On the basis of the most modern scientific findings, the authors

demonstrate that the pineal gland may be the organ responsible for the reactions of our organism to numerous subtle influences ranging from electromagnetic waves to the circadian rhythms. Thirteen pages of references make this material really impressive and important for everybody involved in the field. For several years we will be referring to this source in all discussions concerning subtle healing modalities. The overview given in this book creates a useful classification of different practices now being more and more widely accepted.

Finally, the brief discussion of 'Soul Medicine: Crossing the Border' looks more like an introduction to the next book, as the topic is controversial and only a few researchers have the courage to cross this fascinating but risky boundary. The authors offer the idea of 'Integral Psychology: Integration of the Body, Mind/Emotions and Spirit'. Without doubt, this approach will attract the attention of twenty-first-century researchers, and several pages of this book will be a helpful resource. Let us hope that in the very near future Leonard Wisneski and Lucy Anderson present us with a book totally dedicated to soul medicine.

As you see from this short description, *The Scientific Basis of Integrative Medicine* should be actively used as a tool by every doctor, researcher and practitioner involved in CAM practice. Together with scientific lessons written in a very friendly style, the reader will derive much pleasure from the numerous examples from practice and life experience of Dr. Wisneski, one of the leaders in the field of modern integrative medicine.